

I am pleased to report that the conversion to a forestry camp has been very successful and has provided the wards additional opportunities to learn new job skills in a positive work environment. They are being utilized for a variety of jobs ranging from work in tree nurseries, landscaping projects, maintenance of trails and roads, and several Arrundo removal and native plant restoration projects. Since the crews will not be responding to fire incidents, their schedule will be more stable with fewer interruptions to their academic program. This will enhance their schooling, training, and overall experience.

The Department's Forestry Division staff are badged and uniformed professionals. The foresters have provided a very positive Fire Department presence and are excellent role models for these young wards. We met with the Los Angeles County Probation Commission on January 22, 2003 to brief them on the merits of the camp conversion. The Commission provided a very positive response to the proposal, and we will be briefing them in the near future on the status of the conversion.

Recent Accomplishments

The following is a list of significant recent accomplishments at Camp 17 since April 1, 2003:

- ◆ Established goals and objectives, and developed written training guidelines.
- ◆ Developed a physical fitness program for the wards.
- ◆ Trained 78 wards for placement on Forestry crews. Training topics include:
 - Crew carrier safety
 - Tree care and maintenance
 - Landscape construction and maintenance
 - Installation and maintenance of landscape irrigation systems
 - Tree nursery operations
 - Brush chipper use
 - Employment opportunities
- ◆ Currently, four crews are staffed with 13 wards each; two crews are available per day Monday through Friday for work projects.
- ◆ Developed Certificates of Accomplishment for the wards to recognize their training and skills accomplishments.

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- ◆ Crews have participated in the following projects:
 - Completed the annual tree plantation maintenance at the Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park.
 - Assisted with the Arundo Removal Project at the Santa Fe Dam.
 - Completed brush clearance at four Department Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) sites.
 - Removal of 800 trees at Burro Canyon that were killed in the Williams Wildfire Incident.

There has been an excellent cooperation between the Probation and Fire Departments to ensure the success of the program. The Probation Department staff has provided numerous comments stating that the wards are very enthusiastic about the Forestry program and their interest in becoming a crew member. Additionally, our Forestry Division staff are currently exploring job placement opportunities for those wards that are interested in pursuing a career in forestry or the landscaping fields.

If additional information is required, please contact me or David R. Leininger, Chief, Forestry Division, at (323) 890-4330.

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